

## USAID Assistance to Iraq's Health Care Sector

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WASHINGTON, DC 20523  
PRESS OFFICE  
<http://www.usaid.gov/>  
Press: (202) 712-4320  
Public Information: (202) 712-4810

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Contact: USAID Press Office

### Key Sector Objectives:

- Expand the availability of basic health care to meet priority, short-term needs of the population through:
  - assistance in the rapid restoration of essential health services and supplies;
  - rehabilitation and equipping of selected primary health care units;
  - enhancing disease surveillance and health information systems to enable monitoring of outbreaks and rapid response;
- Strengthen Ministry of Health (MOH) health sector management;
- Expand awareness of basic health, water and sanitation issues;
- Support rapid response, quick impact grants to nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations;
- Restore potable water supply through provision of emergency water supplies and emergency repair of water and sanitation facilities;
- Rehabilitate wastewater treatment plants and restore sanitary sewage disposal.

### KEY ACTIVITIES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

#### Rapidly restored essential primary health care (PHC) services to support women and children nationwide:

- Procured PHC equipment kits for 600 clinics; over half of these have been distributed
- Distributed supplementary doses of Vitamin A to more than 600,000 children under two and 1.5 million lactating mothers
- Provided iron folate supplements to over 1.6 million women of childbearing age
- Revived targeted nutrition program:
  - Conducted central and district level training for health workers and volunteers working in PHC centers and community child care units (CCCUs) to screen for malnutrition, to conduct growth monitoring, and to manage rehabilitation of acutely malnourished children;
  - Provided anthropometric (height measuring mats, measuring tapes) and other equipment (scales) for growth monitoring activities in PHCCs, CCCUs, and nutrition rehabilitation centers;
  - Provided regular shipments of high protein biscuits for provision to malnourished children under 5 and pregnant/lactating mothers;
  - Developed national program on wheat flour fortification with iron and folic acid and salt iodization, with planned national level fortification by mid-2005;
  - Trained health workers and pediatricians in breastfeeding promotion and counseling of mothers;
  - Distributed more than 5 million sachets of oral rehydration salts and nationwide to treat diarrheal dehydration.
  - Screened over 1.3 million children under five for malnutrition and distributed high protein biscuits and fortified milk to more than 450,000 children and 200,000 pregnant and nursing mothers
- Supported training of trainers for programs in breastfeeding and maternal and child health programs, Lactational Amenorrhea Method and Infant and Young Child Feeding
- Disbursed small grants to 34 groups to conduct health activities in 7 governorates, including medical specialty forum, installation of incinerators, potable water, equipment for handicapped children and adults;

- rehabilitation of PHCC, education on early detection of breast cancer, repair of water and sewage stations
- Supported development of plan of action for a National Micronutrients Deficiency Disorders Survey, which will provide baseline data on Vitamin A deficiency, iodine deficiency disorder, iron deficiency anemia and iron deficiency in mothers and children; the survey will also provide information on the nutritional status of under 5 children and infant/young child feeding practices for children under 2 years of age.

### **Rapidly addressed urgent water and sanitation service needs to prevent disease outbreaks:**

- Provided potable water to over 400,000 persons daily in Basrah and approximately 170,000 persons in Kirkuk and Mosul
- Repaired 1,700 breaks in Baghdad's water distribution network
- Rehabilitated water treatment facilities in four governorates
- Procured water purification supplies such as aluminum sulphate and chlorine gas to the Baghdad Water Authority to service water treatment facilities in Baghdad and other urban locations
- Repaired over 100 sewage pumping stations, rainwater stations and collapsed sewer lines in 6 governorates
- Rehabilitated urban water systems in Quadasiya Governorate and 12 additional urban areas; rehabilitation of one of two main reservoirs for Baghdad underway;
- Completed work on 12 sewage pumping stations in Baghdad; began work on sewage lines in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Baghdad;
- Strengthened environmental health measures through technical and logistical support for water quality control activities in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Tikrit

### **Increased Immunization Services and Impact:**

- Conducted regular immunization campaigns and national immunization days aimed at children under five and pregnant women
  - Vaccinated approximately 5 million children aged six through twelve against measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) in March 2004 campaign;
  - Vaccinated approximately 3.29 million children under 5 in Fall 2004 polio immunization campaign;
  - Provided vaccine supplies such as auto-dispensable syringes and cold chain equipment to support vaccination campaigns for polio and MMR as well as National Immunization Days to immunize defaulters;
- Provided vaccine supplies for Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI) to cover needs through the end of 2004, sufficient to benefit 4.2 million children under five and 700,000 pregnant women through routine immunization programs;
- Provided kerosene refrigerators, syringes, cold chain parts and pick-up vehicles to 34 remote health centers to support routine immunization services and vaccine transportation;
- Provided autodisposable syringes to Sulaymania, Erbil, Dohuk to cover immunization program needs through 2005.
- Rehabilitated central vaccine cold rooms and vaccine store generators and provided emergency supplies of fuel;
- Provided information technology support to the MOH/Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI) unit to strengthen immunization data collection and analysis;
- Established sentinel surveillance sites to collect and transmit information on patients in hospitals and health centers;
- Printed 5,000 routine immunization registry books;
- Printed 1 million mother and 1 million child cards to support health registration and vital statistics collection;
- Undertook social mobilization campaign to create awareness regarding the resumption of EPI services.

### **Initiated efforts to enhance the effectiveness and long-term impact of services:**

- Trained 22 master trainers who conducted primary health care (PHC) and family medicine training to update 750 physician providers on best clinical practices in PHC with a focus on maternal and child health
- Trained 2,500 primary health care providers to upgrade their technical skills and knowledge to improve performance
- Supported MOH participation in over 30 training courses in a broad range of technical and management subjects such as district team problem solving; epidemiological surveillance; health management leadership; data collection; integrated management of childhood illness, National Health Accounts, rapid assessment for health planning, promoting rational drug use; and health economics and health financing
- Educated over 2,000 health educators, teachers, religious leaders and youth on communication for behavior change empowered them to mobilize communities on issues of hygiene, diarrhea, breastfeeding, nutrition

- and immunization
- Conducted information, education and communications activities to disseminate essential health messages to families around the country
- Renovated 110 primary health care centers to expand access to care
- Rehabilitated Public Health Laboratories and provided supplies and equipment to enable rapid and accurate diagnosis of diseases
- Rehabilitated, equipped and furnished National Polio Laboratory
- Rehabilitated blood banks to enable performance of essential diagnostic tests and detection and control of disease outbreaks
- Supported development of a national plan for fortification of wheat flour with iron and folic acid with fortification expected to be on line by 2005
- Rehabilitated and equipped Ministry of Health Headquarters, Baghdad

Built the foundations for long-term sector management:

- Re-established the national disease surveillance and response system to minimize the spread of epidemics
  - Assisted the MOH in epidemiological and entomological surveillance and supported vector control activities to prevent and control leishmaniasis, kalazar and malaria
  - Provided two years worth of anti-tuberculosis drugs and trained providers on directly observed therapy short course (DOTS) treatment strategies
  - Procured and distributed 500,000 long lasting bednets for malaria and leishmaniasis prevention; distributed along with leaflets and educational material for users and health care providers
  - Supported MOH development of a national health vision to guide strategies and approaches and a series of local forums to solicit input on health sector reforms. This vision was used as a key reference document at a MOH National Conference in August 2004 attended by over 350 representatives from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Higher Education.
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